REMARKS

Claims 1, 10, 15, 24, 29, 30, 31, and 32 have been amended. No new matter is introduced by the amendments of these claims. The amendments are supported on page 15, lines 18-24, among other places. Claims 1-40 remain pending.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mighdoll et al. (US 6,073,168) in view of Bakke et al. (US 5,566,170). The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed as follows.

Claim 1 is directed towards a method "of distributing packets among a plurality of processing devices." Claim 1 also requires "receiving a packet" and "inputting at least a portion of the packet into a content addressable memory." Claim 1 also requires "obtaining a result from the content addressable memory (CAM) to indicate whether to redirect the received packet to a selected processing device" and "redirecting the received packet to the selected processing device when the CAM indicates to redirect the received packet and to indicate to which processing device selected from among the plurality of processing devices the received packet is to be redirected if the CAM also indicates that the received packet is to be redirected, wherein the CAM is configured to distribute received packets to the plurality of processing devices based on a load balancing technique." Claim 1 further requires "sending the received packet to a destination indicated by the received packet when the CAM does not indicate to redirect the received packet." Independent claims 15, 29, and 31 have a similar limitation regarding obtaining a result from the CAM which indicates whether to redirect the received packet and to indicate to which processing device selected from among the plurality of processing devices the received packet is to be redirected if the CAM also indicates that the received packet is to be redirected, wherein the CAM is configured to distribute received packets to the plurality of processing devices based on a load balancing technique.

Claim 24 is directed towards "a computer system operable to facilitate traffic distribution among a plurality of devices." The system has "a first memory; a content addressable memory; and a processor coupled to the first memory and the content addressable memory." Claim 24 also requires that "at least one of the first memory and the processor are adapted to provide generating a plurality of entries within the content addressable memory, each entry including a set of bit values that correspond to at least a portion of a packet and each entry including one or more destination fields indicating where to send a packet that matches the entry's set of bit values and indicating whether to redirect the packet from a destination indicated by the packet, and to indicate to which processing device selected from among the plurality of processing devices the received packet is to be redirected if the CAM also indicates that the received packet is to be

redirected, wherein the CAM is configured to distribute received packets to the plurality of devices based on a load balancing technique." Claims 10, 30, and 32 also have an apparatus having such a CAM configuration or a method of using such CAM configuration.

In other words, a content addressable memory (CAM) is used to obtain an indication about whether to redirect a packet and an indication as to where to redirect such packets so that the packets are distributed among a plurality of processing devices, such as a plurality of cache devices. If the CAM indicates a redirect, the packet is redirected to a processing device selected from a plurality of processing devices, such as a plurality of cache devices. Otherwise, the packet is forwarded to its intended destination. The present invention allows extremely efficient evaluation of redirection decisions based on load balancing techniques by, for example, using a CAM to quickly assess whether to redirect a packet from its intended destination and to where to distribute such request among a plurality of devices.
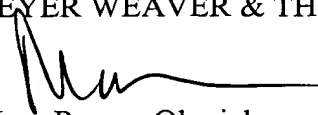
The primary reference Mighdoll et al. describes a webTV system for retrieving a client 1 request for a document from a webTV server 5 (see Fig. 1). The webTV server 5 has a document database 61. The webTV server 5 receives a request for a document and then accesses this database 61 to determine whether there is a redirect address for the request. The document may initially be located on a particular remote server and then moved to another remote server, which is the redirect address. When a document is moved from a first remote server to a second remote server, the first remote server indicates to the webTV server that the document has moved to the second remote server when receiving a request for such document from the webTV server. See Column 12, Lines 59-67. The webTV server then updates its documentation database 61 with the redirect address of the second remote server for this particular document so that requests for the same document can then be redirected to the second remote server. That is, the documentation database 61 merely specifies where to redirect a particular request and does not provide a mechanism for distributing requests to a plurality of servers based on a load balancing scheme, in the manner claimed. For example, a particular document request will always go to the same redirect server and will not be *distributed* among a plurality of servers based on a load balancing technique, in contrast to an apparatus having a CAM or method for using such CAM wherein the CAM is configured to distribute received packets to the plurality of processing devices based on a load balancing technique, in the manner claimed. The secondary references also fail to teach or suggest such limitation in the manner claimed. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 10, 15, 24, 29, 30, 31, and 32 are patentable over the cited art.

The Examiner's rejections of the dependent claims are also respectfully traversed. However, to expedite prosecution, all of these claims will not be argued separately. Claims 2-9, 11-14, 16-23, 25-28, and 33-40 each depend directly from independent claims 1, 10, 15, 24, 29,

30, 31, or 32 and, therefore, are respectfully submitted to be patentable over cited art for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1, 10, 15, 24, 29, 30, 31, or 32. Further, the dependent claims require additional elements that when considered in context of the claimed inventions further patentably distinguish the invention from the cited art.

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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